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P. Buchanan, James D.

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Another Rap for the CIA

THE PROFESSIONAL
By JAMES D. BUCHANAN

(Coward, McCann &

Geoghegan) \$5.95

Reviewed by

CHARLES OHL

The Globe-Democrat-

Copley News Service

"The Professional" is billed as a suspense novel and indeed it is. Author James Buchanan doesn't believe in holding the suspense for the big revelation on the last page. Instead, he threads his novel about the spy world around a series of mini-climaxes. It's like riding a roller coaster that keeps climbing again after you think you've taken the last big plunge.

THE "PROFESSIONAL" is Stephen Guerin and he belongs body and soul and socks to something called "The Firm," which is obviously that organization writers (especially those from such schools as the New School For Social Research) never get tired of stomping on: the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Right off, Buchanan blames

the CIA for Guerin having lost his wife and children to another man.

But the CIA, or "The Firm," also is having its troubles holding the family together. Like the big world outside, it has been driven by factionalism; there is a faction of hard-line conservatives in the organization, a faction of liberals who want to reason with the enemy, and a smattering of neutrals like Guerin.

THE CRUX of the Buchanan novel is a plot by the hard lines to hang the John F. Kennedy assassination on Communist Cuba. Guerin heads a mission into Cuba to bring out the evidence which is in the hands of Julia Fernandez, a black beauty who would secure top marks from Women's Lib.

Buchanan tells his story well, although some of the incidents lean heavily on a reader's credulity. But anti-CIA novels are themselves getting a bit over the hill. You can cry "villain" to the point of getting readers yawning.